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ABSTRACT

In the first of the two addresses presented in this publication, George Vaughan examines trends likely to influence the development of community colleges in the United States. He predicts: (1) the increased representation of women, minorities, part-time, and older students will continue; (2) increased competition with higher education institutions and training programs for students in the traditional college age group (18 to 22 years) will intensify; (3) new faculty positions will be limited and faculty will be older and less mobile; (4) a more holistic approach to student development and the linking of counseling and instruction will become necessary; (5) flexibility and responsiveness to changing social needs and the adaptation to new technology will be required; (6) though community colleges will not be immune to economic pressures, funds to fulfill their missions are likely to be forthcoming; (7) the trend toward collective bargaining will continue and increased sharing of authority between faculty and administrators will be appropriate; and (8) outside intervention and regulation will increase. The second address, in which Gordon Davies examines trends for Virginia's community colleges, forecasts low growth in student numbers, underscores the need to increase faculty salaries, and enjoins educators and planners to carefully examine proposed and existing programs in terms of regional priorities, economic constraints, and community needs. (HB)

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COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE FUTURE:

THE NATIONAL SCENE

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COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE FUTURE IN VIRGINIA

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COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE FUTURE:
THE NATIONAL SCENE
September 16, 1980

George B. Vaughan, President
Piedmont Virginia Community College

My purpose today is not to play the role of futurist but rather to identify certain current and emerging trends which will likely influence the future development of the community college in America. While my time and knowledge are limited, I hope that what I say today will help further sensitize you to some of the things that are happening at the national level and thus prepare you to interact more fully with our somewhat uncertain future. In turn, I hope that each of you will share with me and your other colleagues your thinking regarding what you view as significant to the future development of the community college. As members of the Piedmont Virginia Community College community, we can play a role in determining our future if we recognize and understand the forces which are shaping it.

Many of the trends I identify as future trends have their roots in the past and indeed often represent current practices. Thus the future in community college education, like the future in most areas, is an extension of the past and present. In the interest of preserving my sanity, I have limited my efforts to those political, economic, and social trends which I feel have a direct relationship to the subject at hand.

The Student Body

According to the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, in the fall of 1979, 1,230 two-year colleges enrolled 4,487,872 students in credit courses. Women made up slightly more than 50 percent of the full-time credit students and 53 percent of the total headcount enrollment. Minority enrollment made up approximately 26 percent of the full-time enrollment and approximately 20 percent of the part-time enrollment. Approximately 61 percent of the students attended part-time. Of the students 22 and older, 54 percent were married. The mean age of all two-year college students enrolled for credit was 27. In addition to credit enrollments, approximately 4 1/2 million people engaged in non-credit activities at the nation's two-year colleges.

The Student of the Future

What does the above information tell us about the future of the community college? It is probably safe to conclude that the practice of enrolling more women, more minorities, more part-time and more older students will continue. Also, it seems likely that more and more people will engage in various non-credit activities offered by community colleges. Certainly a trend which you all are familiar with and one you will hear more about today is the decreasing number of students in the traditional college age group of 18-22 years of age.

The students in the years ahead will have more influence on what type of college education they receive than they had during the 1970's. A major reason for this increase in influence is that the pool of younger students is becoming smaller, thus creating greater competition for this reduced number of students. Another reason is that the federal government provides many students with a voucher (Basic Educational Opportunity Grants, etc.) which they can redeem at the college of their choice. Enrollment at a certain college or failure to enroll will likely become a powerful weapon in the student's arsenal.

Implied in the above is the belief that community colleges will engage in severe recruitment wars with four-year colleges and universities, with proprietary schools, with training programs offered by business and industry, with the military, and with the labor market to recruit available students in the 18-22 age category.

A trend we will see emerging within the next few years will be the encouragement of community colleges to work more closely with high schools. I say this because the Carnegie Foundation is putting a great deal of money into a project to bring about closer cooperation between higher education and secondary schools. The result might be that community colleges will enroll a sizable number of students who are in the last two years of high school.

The Faculty

Approximately 212,000 full- and part-time faculty members were teaching in two-year colleges in the fall of 1979. Thirty-nine percent of the faculty members were women. The number of women teaching in two-year colleges increased 15 percent from 1975-1979 *(AACJC Fact Sheet*, "Faculty in Two-Year Colleges," March 1980). However, there will be a tendency in the future for community colleges to employ fewer and fewer women and minorities simply because fewer positions will be available. One can hope that this will not be a trend; however, the continued employment of women and minorities is something we should continue to be sensitive to.

The trend of the last few years of hiring a smaller number of new faculty members will continue for the foreseeable future. According to one study, the last boom period in faculty hiring was from the years 1960-1970; the next will be from the years 2000 to 2010 *(Three Thousand Futures, Final Report of the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education,* Jossey-Bass, 1980, p. 25). The trend will be for faculty members to stay in their present positions, gain tenure or multi-year contracts and thus become more expensive. Therefore, salaries will command a greater share of the college's budget. Also, for a number of reasons, community colleges will continue to employ a large number of part-time faculty members.

Community college faculties have, in my opinion, gained the edge over faculty members at four-year institutions in dealing with a diverse student body. This advantage will serve the community colleges well in the future, therefore, enabling community college faculty members to play a key role in influencing students to attend a community college.

As faculty members become less mobile and grow older, they will view the community college where they teach more as their institution and will work to see that quality is maintained. They will also work to see that their institution not only survives but succeeds. I believe the future will see less "in-fighting" between a stable faculty and an administration that also finds its mobility lessened.

Finally, professional development will become an even more important concept for those faculty members who are leaders in their profession. In the past, mobility provided a form of renewal. In the future, renewal will become a process that takes place through the use of resources on one's own campus. In my opinion, faculty renewal through a professional development program which is tied closely to one's position might be the most important internal issue we face during the coming years. Also, the development of a successful program for faculty development might be the most difficult internal problem community colleges will face at the national level.

Student Services

Much of the past and much current activity associated with student services has been primarily concerned with performing an increasing number of tasks associated with information processing. For example, financial aid was almost unheard of twenty years ago, yet today is a major function of student services. The trend toward providing more information and keeping more records will continue. However, I feel that we will see student services joining hands with instruction to work more closely with students in academic areas. I say this because as the community college student body becomes even more diverse, students will require that counseling be more closely related to the primary reason for attending the community college—instruction. Student services will gradually

move to the concept of student development, whereby the student is again viewed in a holistic fashion. At the same time, I feel the trend is going to be even further away from extracurricular activities such as dances, clubs, and other activities that have traditionally primarily served the 18-22 year old students.

Curriculum and Instruction

Certainly the subject of what curriculums we will see in the future is too complex to deal with here. But I feel that if we are to serve society, we must be willing to develop new programs, even at the cost of dropping established ones, simply because needs change and resources are limited. One of the community college's strengths lies in being responsive. If we cease to be responsive, we will lose much of our appeal. Consequently, I feel the future will find community colleges continuing to be flexible in what they offer.

I believe that the near future will see much action in such areas as competency-based programs. I feel that the much touted instructional revolution based on modern technology may make significant strides in the near future. Microprocessors may make the breakthrough that television has promised for so long. On the other hand, television appears ready to bring to the education scene the things it has promised for years. The effects on curriculum and instruction as a result of competency-based programs and instructional technology may well be profound.

Unfortunately, from my point of view, I see less emphasis on transfer education in the community college. If the current trend toward more and more technical and vocational education continues (approximately 50 percent of all students are currently enrolled in occupational programs), community colleges will have an even more difficult time providing adequate programs in the humanities. General education will also have less impact if community colleges continue to de-emphasize transfer education. I maintain that an outstanding technical program must have a good general education component.

Enrollments

I have briefly alluded to the type of student community colleges might expect to enroll in the future. A logical question might be how many students the nation's community colleges will have? Predicting enrollment trends on the local level is hazardous enough, so it would certainly be presumptuous of me to attempt to predict enrollment trends at the national level. For example, during the last two decades external forces such as Sputnik, the great wave of students following the baby boom, the new affluence of American society, the civil rights movements, the Vietnam war, and the student movement of the 1960's have all had a great influence on enrollments in higher education since 1960. But only one of these–the mass of students resulting from the baby boom–was predicted in advance (*Three Thousand Futures*, p. 85). Rather than trying to determine an enrollment trend at the national level I will simply suggest that you read the final report of the Carnegie Council entitled *Three Thousand Futures* and *Investment in Learning* by Howard R. Bowen, to get a feel for what enrollment trends *might* look like in the future.

Financing

While noting that community colleges seem to be the favored section of higher education as far as funding is concerned since they have responded to new clients, have established outreach programs, have been responsive to new markets, have dealt with older and part-time students, and have in general endeared themselves to politicians, one writer feels that community colleges are nevertheless far from being immune to serious economic pressures (David Breneman, "Economic Trends: What Do They Imply for Higher Education?" *AAHE Bulletin*, September 1979). I believe that the community college will have some financial difficulty

and will have to interpret its mission more clearly and more effectively. I feel that this will be done and that while financing will never return to the golden age of the 1960's and early 1970's, community colleges will nevertheless have funds to fulfill much of their mission. The one place I believe we will find the greatest pressure to cut back will be in the area of recreational-type courses such as karate, macrame, and that all-time favorite, belly dancing. Legislators might begin to question the need for remedial education at the post-secondary level, especially in light of the "back to basics" movement in public schools. But in general, community colleges have become too valuable to society and too popular to be faced with any movement designed to cut services drastically.

Governance

Earlier I suggested that the trend will be for the faculty and administration to work together in a manner that promotes the best interest of the college. In spite of this, I feel that the movement toward collective bargaining will continue in the community college. But collective bargaining will be almost solely for economic purposes such as job protection, higher salaries, better working conditions, and other issues which can be dealt with through contractual relationships. I feel the real issue in governance will be in trying to preserve some sense of autonomy and professional competence in the face of continued encroachment by outside sources. If faculty and administration work well together and if some degree of campus autonomy is maintained, governance must be based on shared authority and I believe it will be.

Encroachment

The trend toward more rules and regulations being forced on community colleges will not abate. These pressures will continue to come from legislative bodies, higher education coordinating agencies, the executive branch at both the state and national levels, and any number of agencies at all levels. The trend is going to be to view these outside influences not so much as enemies but rather as interlopers on the academic scene. I wrote an article some years ago entitled "A View from the Trenches" in which I described some of the complex issues created by encroachment. I ended the article by noting that T.S. Eliot wrote that the world would end not with a bang, but with a whimper. I felt at the time that the community college world would not end with a bang *nor* a whimper, but would simply cease to exist as paper work, report deadlines, audits, and outside pressures increased *(Community College Frontiers,* Summer 1977, pp. 4-6). I am more optimistic today. As suggested by my comments on financing, community colleges will continue to exist, but will continue to lose more influence on campus and in society in general if other forces continue to increase their control over the community college's destiny.

Unlearning the Language

The future will continue to see our language filled with new words or old words with new meanings and more and more acronyms. For example, it is being suggested that we drop the word student in favor of learner; that dropouts, or if you prefer the more recent word, stopouts, now be called leavers; and that graduates be called finishers. Our computer experts are constantly wanting to know if our computers can interface with each other or, put another way, if they are compatible–and we are told that if they are not compatible they cannot talk to each other.

No less distinguished organization than the august American Council on Education suggests that faculty handbook revisions should be undertaken in "a proactive rather than a reactive manner." The dilemma we face is outlined rather well in an article entitled "The Doublespeak of Academia" (D.G. Kehl in *National Forum,* Summer 1980, pp. 36-37). The author introduces his article with the following: "In order to optimize and effectuate higher education's operational thrust toward realization of viable objectives at this particular point in time, I

wish to address the problem of communicational skills within these hierarchical structures. Hopefully, this kind of bottom-line dialogue will stimulate input and feedback leading to meaningful alternatives that can be implemented throughout the entire academic spectrum and will serve at once to minimize the counter-productivity which comes of misconceptualizing the interface and to maximize the impact of the entire educative process."

I could go on, but to do so might impede the conferees at this charette from maximizing the accessibility needed to facilitate the teaching-learning process and thus minimize your chances of being on the cutting edge of what's happening and therefore prevent you from being held truly accountable.

In Conclusion

I realize that I have not touched on such important issues as energy (I view the community college's dependence on the automobile as its Achilles' heel), the economy, and demand for increased services for the older members of society. I have failed to deal with such trends as the movement toward more state funding. In general, I have taken an optimistic view of the future of the community college in America, especially in reference to governance and financing.

Finally, I was asked what I viewed as the most important trend affecting the future of the community college. My answer is the trend toward having our mission questioned or misunderstood by practically everyone. Those of us who work in community colleges must understand our mission and be able and willing to explain it to legislators, to coordinating bodies, and to the public.

Thank you for permitting me to present my views on some trends I see on the national scene. Hopefully, we at Piedmont Virginia Community College will be sensitive to future trends and therefore be better able to chart our destinies.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE FUTURE IN VIRGINIA

September 16, 1980

Gordon K. Davies, Director
State Council of Higher Education

The forecast for community colleges in Virginia is as follows:

Mostly sunny, with occasional clouds of suspicion and the possibility of lightning storms in the mid-80's. General high pressure conditions will continue along the urban corridor and in some scattered areas of the state, but there will be pockets of severe depression in some non-urban areas. The irritability index will remain high, and atmospheric conditions will cause frequent static on lines of communication. Persons suffering from extreme paranoia are advised not to read local newspapers.

Last week, the Council of Higher Education approved enrollment forecasts for the state-supported institutions. Overall, they indicate an increase of only 18,000 FTE over the next 12 years, on a base of 157,000. For the community colleges, they show an increase of 10,000, on a base of 50,000. In other words, the majority of the growth is yours, but there won't be a whole lot of growth.

Now many of you are probably skeptical of the Council forecast, and I can understand that. As my favorite philosopher, Casey Stengel, used to say, "Planning is always difficult, especially when it deals with the future."

But these forecasts are not brought to you by the same persons who called the *Titanic* unsinkable or the *Hindenberg* the epitome of air travel. They are done on a far less grand scale by folks who know how hard it is to predict what will happen next week much less next year. And over the years, the record has been pretty good--actual enrollments have been within about one percent of forecasts. The major problem we have all had is forecasting full-time equivalent enrollment in the community colleges. We are all pretty good at estimating how many persons will register, but we are not as good at estimating for how many courses each person will register.

Some general trends are clear, however. The rate of growth overall will slow, and enrollments may decline at some institutions. There will be fewer younger students, and more older; fewer full-time, and more part-time; increasing participation of women and minorities.

It is also clear that this is a bumper year for enrollment, because both the size of the 18-21 year old population and the number of high school graduates peaked last year, and there are more potential enrollments than ever before. Add to this the sad fact that bad economic times are good for higher education enrollments, and we can see a surge reminiscent of what is affectionately called the "Great Blip of 1975," when enrollments across the nation suddenly surged at least in part because of severe unemployment and recession.

The next decade is one which we shall be well-advised to enter with no preconceptions, no pigeon holes that must remain filled at all costs. For the community colleges, this means that nothing, either organizational or pedagogical, should be considered immune from change.

It may be, for instance, that some community colleges and nearby senior institutions should be merged, in the interest of averting what could become nasty and destructive recruiting wars.

It may be, if community college transfer programs are not going to fare well in the 80's, that they should be eliminated from the curricula of some colleges. I know this is heresy to the proponents of comprehensive community colleges, but we need to be willing to look at all the alternatives without putting on blinders.

On the other hand, in some urban areas of the state, we might consider making the senior institutions upper level and graduate only, so as to avert the recruiting wars. I proposed this as a possibility recently, only to be told by a knowledgeable observer that the real reason it wouldn't ever work is that it damages intercollegiate athletic programs if you can't have freshmen and sophomore athletes. Now there's a cogent "given" to work around in higher education planning!

Despite rumblings about public disaffection from higher education, I do not see that the citizens of Virginia have lost either their interest in higher education or their desire to continue their educations. Indeed, the participation rates are up in almost every sector of the population, and are likely to remain up.

I do worry, however, about the public willingness to support education financially–and here I am talking about education from kindergarten through doctoral programs.

Your salaries, on the average, are at just barely 90 percent of the authorized salary average for the Virginia Community College System. And the authorized salary average is the *average* community college salary across the nation, so you are 90 percent of average, and that's not good enough.

In the 1981 Session of the General Assembly, one of the highest Council of Higher Education priorities will be to get Virginia's faculty members additional salary money. There will not be a lot of money available, but the Council will do what it can.

It's not just your problem, however. If the hard truth be known, your colleagues in the public school systems need salary increases even more. And across all of education administrators are deferring maintenance and repairs, not replacing obsolescent or obsolete equipment, not maintaining serials and periodicals in the libraries–because there isn't enough money.

No one is able to invest heavily in faculty development, to renew and retain the vitality of education's most valuable resource. It is most ironic that our colleges and universities receive support from the state to provide continuing education and development for every kind of professional except the members of their own faculties and staffs.

In facing up to this situation, and trying to do our jobs with limited resources, it is essential that Virginia's colleges and universities trim away all the trappings which may be seen by the public as indications that we really are fat and comfortable. Legislators in particular are not impressed by pleas for more money when some apparently frivolous leisure courses are offered at public expense. They are not impressed by declaration of poverty when 135 new academic degree programs have been proposed by the VCCS for initiation over the next six years.

You should be prepared to drop low priority programs when you start new ones, to offer fewer options but better ones to prospective students, to accept a regional program distribution within the community college system so that every offering is not within commuting distance of every person, but every offering is an absolutely first-rate program.

These are not easy injunctions, I know. But I think they are important because, like it or not, the burden of proof and persuasion is on us, and not on the taxpayer and his elected representative. If we are to argue together for better support of higher education, we and the general public must be convinced that what we do is done as efficiently and effectively as possible.

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